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**N. LENIN**

**His Life and Work**

*By*

**G. ZINOVIEFF**

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The Communist Party,  
21a Maiden Lane,  
Strand, London, W.C.2



# NICOLAI LENIN

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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# Nicolai Lenin : His Life and Work.

By G. ZINOVIEFF.

## PREFACE.

The present booklet is the shorthand report of a speech delivered by me on the 6th of September, 1918, at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet. The comrades have persistently demanded from me the publication of this speech in a separate booklet in order that the widest possible circles of workers and peasants might have an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the biography of Comrade Lenin.

My speech, naturally, gives only the most cursory sketch of the life and work of Comrade Lenin. It was my intention to revise and enlarge it but pressure of work, to my deep regret, has not even allowed me attentively to read through the shorthand notes. I feel that I have not said even the tenth part of that which I might and ought to have said of the life and work of Comrade Lenin.

The present booklet presents only a feeble beginning of a biography of Comrade Lenin, which is yet to be written. To more this booklet does not pretend.

The Petrograd Soviet decided to publish it simultaneously in French, German, and English.

Nothing now remains but to beg Comrade Lenin's forgiveness for having taken this decision to relate publicly some part of that which Comrade Lenin would certainly have preferred to remain unknown to the general public. The working class *ought* to know something of the biography of their acknowledged leader.

G. Z.

Comrades! Last week may be called Lenin's week. I think I shall not in any way exaggerate if I say that every honest worker in Petrograd, in the whole of Europe, indeed, even in the whole world, so far as he may have heard the news of the attempt on Comrade Lenin, had in the course of these anxious days no other thought than the one question, will the wounded leader of International Communism recover? And I, comrades, am happy to share with you the good news: to-day we may—at last—count the recovery of Comrade Lenin as entirely assured. (Thunderous applause).

Comrades, I have in my hands a telegram, written already by Comrade Lenin himself. (Thunderous applause).

This telegram was handed in to-day at 1.10 a.m., from the Kremlin. This is, apparently, the first telegram of Comrade Lenin since he began to recover. Comrade Lenin gives us certain official instructions and finishes the telegram with the following words: "Affairs at the front are going well; I have no doubt that they will go still better." (Applause). Therefore, comrades, one thing is clear, that Comrade Lenin will live (applause, ovation) to the terror of the enemies of Communism and to the joy of the proletarian Communists.

Comrades! It goes without saying, that in this hall there is not one single man who does not know, in general and as a whole, who Lenin is. Every working man has heard of Lenin, knows that this is a gigantic figure in the history of the Labour movement of the whole world. Everyone is so much accustomed to the word "Lenin," that he does not stop to think what, after all, he has done

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for the international and Russian Labour movement. Every proletarian knows that Lenin is the leader, Lenin is the apostle of world Communism. (Applause). But I think, comrades, that we cannot pay a greater honour to our teacher and leader to-day than if I, who am acquainted with the biography of Comrade Lenin somewhat intimately—I have had the good fortune to work side by side with Comrade Lenin in the closest collaboration for more than ten years—if I take advantage of the present occasion in order to share, though it be only in brief, with younger friends and older comrades, who have never had the opportunity of observing so closely the work of Comrade Lenin, my authentic knowledge of the life of Comrade Lenin. (Numerous voices, Please do!)

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Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin-Ulianoff is now 48 years old. He was born in the year 1870, on the 10th of April, at Simbirsk. And out of the 48 years of his life, Comrade Lenin has devoted nearly 30 years work to the cause of freedom.

The father of Comrade Lenin, by birth a peasant, was director of the elementary schools in the Volga provinces, and enjoyed great popularity among the teachers of the town and village schools in his district.

The mother of Comrade Lenin I knew personally. She died in the year 1913. Alexander III had executed her eldest son, Alexander Ulianoff. From that time she concentrated her maternal tenderness on Vladimir Ilyitch. And Comrade Lenin, in his turn, tenderly loved his broken-hearted little mother.

Living in exile, hunted by the Tsar's Government, Comrade Lenin would tear himself away from the most urgent work in order to make a special journey to Sweden to pay a visit to his mother and to brighten for her the last days of her life.

After leaving the classical "gymnasium," Lenin

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entered the faculty of Laws at Kazan University. The universities of the capitals were closed to him as the brother of an executed terrorist. A student, however, Vladimir Ilyitch remained but a very short while. At the end of a month they ejected him for taking part in the students' revolutionary movement. Only after the lapse of four years was it possible for him to take his final examinations.

The legal career, however, had no attractions for Comrade Lenin. Vladimir Ilyitch always spoke in very humorous terms of his few days of "practice" at the bar. Comrade Lenin's predilections lay in an entirely different direction. He yearned after revolutionary activities.

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Comrade Lenin stands, as it were, on the borderland between the old school of populist revolutionaries and the new school of revolutionary Marxists. Comrade Lenin himself took part in the student populist associations, but already, even at that time, he stood with one foot in the camp of the Marxists.

Vladimir Ilyitch, however, was bound by ties of blood with the early generation of revolutionary terrorists, those glorious fighters, whose names to this day shine like dazzling stars—because they laid low not the friends of the people, like the wretched Right Socialist Revolutionaries, but the tyrants and oppressors of the people. Vladimir Ilyitch is related by blood to this race of fighters. He is connected with them through his brother Alexander Ilyitch Ulianoff, who was one of the chief promoters of the *Narodnaya Volya*, (People's Will), and who was on that account hanged by the Tsar's Government in the year 1887.

Comrade Lenin himself was never a member of that party. But he has always inculcated upon us the most



ardent respect for this cluster of brilliant revolutionary workers, the first generation of Populist revolutionaries. Lenin, since the time when he awakened to a conscious political life, has never shared the Populist theories. He first became prominent when he began to fight against revolutionary Populism. He was the very antipodes of Mikhailovsky. He gained his first laurels as a Socialist precisely through the struggle against Populism. But nobody had so great a respect, no one ever taught the workers to respect these first fighters against Tsarism, as Vladimir Ilyitch.

In the eyes of Comrade Lenin, such workers as Zhelyaboff and Sophie Perovskaya stood transcendently high—people who raised the flag of revolt and went forward with bomb and revolver against the Tsar at the end of the 'seventies and in the beginning of the 'eighties, when Russia was a prison-house of nations, when every friend of freedom drew breath in pain, when the workers of Russia were still only beginning to form themselves into a class. Vladimir Ilyitch well understood how great and immeasurable were the services of the first heralds of the Russian revolution.

And Comrade Lenin did not reject this heritage. He said: This heritage belongs to us, and to us only. Our task is to carry further that work which was begun by Zhelyaboff. Zhelyaboff, by placing himself on the side of the working class and first raising the question of the Socialist revolution, was, in fact, a Bolshevik, a Communist. In order to do the work of Zhelyaboff under new social conditions we must become revolutionary Marxists, our hearts must beat as one with the working class, the only revolutionary class of our time, that class which is not able to win freedom for itself without freeing the whole world.

Vladimir Ilyitch specially loved and was proud of the figure of the first great working-class leader, the carpen-

ter Stepan Khalturin. Lenin did not know him personally, he knew him by hearsay and books, as we know him ourselves. You know the biography of this extraordinary proletarian of genius, who not only blew up the Winter Palace, but achieved something greater—he was the first to hoist the flag of political struggle against Tsardom in the name of the working class. Comrade Lenin used to say: When we have hundreds of such proletarians as Khalturin, when they are no longer solitary figures, going with bomb or revolver against this or that individual monster, when they rise at the head of teeming multitudes of workers—then we shall be invincible; then will come an end to Tsardom, and with it an end also to the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Comrade Lenin's affection for proletarians who in any way show capacity is especially striking. A fighter whom Lenin always valued and loved was the workman Ivan Vasilyevitch Babushkin, with whom Comrade Lenin here, in Petrograd, began his work in the 'nineties, together starting the first working-class organisations, together leading the first workers' strikes, together taking their part in the organisation of the "Iskra." This comrade played a prominent part in the revolution of 1905, and it was only by accident that in 1907 Vladimir Ilyitch learned from friends among the Siberian exiles that Babushkin had been shot by General Rennenkampf in Siberia.

I. V. Babushkin and Shelgunoff, who is still living, and who is known to the Petrograd proletarians (he has now grown blind)—these renowned fighters, coming out of the working class, Comrade Lenin loved like brothers, placed them before us as an example, saw in them the real forerunners, the true leaders of the dawning workers' revolution.

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The first period of activity of Comrade Lenin, as of many other revolutionaries who sprang from among the



ranks of the intelligentsia, was passed in student circles. When Comrade Lenin was expelled from Kazan University he went to Petrograd. And he used to tell us how, having already caught the Marxist infection in Samara, he walked about Petrograd searching for a Marxist.

*Vivos voco!* But the "tribe" of Marxists was at that time extremely few. There were no Marxists in Petrograd, even if he searched for them in daylight with a torch. The Populists monopolised the minds of all the intellectuals, and the working class were only stretching themselves out of slumber to political life.

And now there comes this young Comrade Lenin, builds up, after a year or two, in Petrograd the first working-class organisations and rallies around himself the first Marxist intellectuals. Very soon Lenin is already in the literary arena crossing swords with the old leader of the Populists, N. K. Mikhailovsky.

Lenin (under the pseudonym of Ilyin) comes forward with a series of brilliant economic articles which at once win for him a name. And immediately in the ranks of the Populist intelligentsia there could be observed a certain alarm. Somebody powerful and strong has disturbed the petty bourgeois pool. The movement of the water begins. On the horizon a new figure has appeared. Someone is stirring up the stagnant air, and there is a breath of newness, freshness. In Petrograd, Comrade Lenin, together with some other followers of Marx and the working men of whom I have spoken, builds up the "Union of the Struggle for the Emancipation of Labour." He was entrusted by this organisation with the conduct of the first working-class strikes, and wrote the first simple, unassuming, hectographed leaflets, in which were formulated the economic demands of the Petrograd workers. It was at this time that Lenin published his first illegal pamphlet "On Fines"—a pamphlet already forgotten, but which for lucid and popular expo-

sition is a classic example of the popularisation of Marxism.

At that time this was the most profitable soil for propaganda: to agitate against the system of fines, to excite economic conflicts, to raise every economic strike to the level of a political event. And Vladimir Ilyitch, with all his passionate nature, gave himself up to the work. He spends his days and nights in the working-class quarters. He is hunted by the police. He has only a small circle of friends. Nearly all so-called revolutionary intellectuals of that time meet him with hostility. The time was not far distant when the Populists burned the first Marxist writings of Plekhanoff, on which Lenin himself was brought up.

Comrade Lenin opened up here a new path. Throughout the whole activity of Comrade Lenin one can notice that he is always an innovator, that he goes against the current, that he ploughs a new furrow in the political and social life. In the 'nineties, too, at Petrograd, it fell to his share to trace out a new path, to form, to rally the first detachments of workers, the first detachments of a genuine working-class intelligentsia, from which more than one leader of the present workers' revolution has come.

It happens very often at the present time that from somewhere out of far Siberia or the Urals there come to the Council of People's Commissaries, or to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, workers who are at present presidents of local Soviets or leaders of the local movement. They go up to Comrade Lenin and begin to call up old memories: "Do you remember in the early 'nineties, at such and such a place, how we stirred up an agitation for the supply of hot water for tea with a certain illegal leaflet, or organised such and such a strike?" Comrade Lenin does not always remember them; too many people have crossed his path. But they all remember him. They know that he was their teacher, that he first let fall



within them the spark of Communism. They know that he was their real friend and leader.

Towards the end of the 'nineties Comrade Lenin, after a long confinement in prison, was obliged to depart into exile. There he developed an immense scientific and literary activity. There he wrote certain works, out of which I will dwell upon two only. The first work was a little pamphlet, "Problems of the Russian Social-Democrats." This pamphlet is now hardly read by anybody. But it remains a masterpiece of a Marxian's treatment of the question as to the part played by the Socialist movement in an economically backward country. At that time no one had finally settled the question: what should be the connection between the political struggle of the workers against Tsardom and the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for economic demands and Socialism?

At the present time, comrades, all this seems as simple as A B C. But in those days this question was far from being so clear. The celebrated "Economists," the predecessors of our Mensheviks, contended that the political struggle must be left to the Liberal bourgeoisie, and the only concern of the working class must be the struggle for an extra penny in the shilling. Comrade Lenin, following the late Plekhanoff (here it is necessary to say that he took a great deal from Plekhanoff) gave a magnificent analysis of the Socialist forces contending for mastery in Russia. We are not to defer (Lenin argued) the formation of working-class parties in Russia until we have won political freedom. No, we have not lagged behind Europe a hundred years in order to hang back with the organisation of labour parties until our bourgeoisie has risen to power. No, now is the time, secretly and under the heavy hand of Tsardom, to build up in spite of these desperately difficult conditions, an independent Socialist class party

of the workers, fighting at once both against Tsardom and against the bourgeoisie.

The manuscript of this pamphlet was got over the frontier to the group of the "Emancipation of Labour." In Switzerland there worked at this time a group consisting of Plekhanoff, Axelrod, and Zassulitch, the first founders of Social-Democracy in Russia. They had lived abroad already 15 years. When this manuscript of Lenin's came to them it was the first tidings they received of the dawning spring. And it was none other than Paul Axelrod, who was at that time a Socialist, and was able to discern the true leaders of the working class, who, on the receipt of the manuscript, got into raptures. He said then to his circle of friends that a prodigious force had appeared in the ranks of our Social-Democracy, that there had arisen a new star of the greatest magnitude. Axelrod wrote a preface to Lenin's pamphlet, in which he could not find enough laudatory words with which to overwhelm Comrade Lenin. He said that for the first time since Plekhanoff there had appeared a leader, a practical expert of the working-class movement, that Lenin was a force to whom was assured an immense future.

And Axelrod, in the present case—one must give him his due—was right.

Still in exile, Comrade Lenin wrote a great scientific work, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia"—a book which ought to have become, and in a great measure did become, the inseparable companion of every worker. In this book Comrade Lenin settled accounts with the Populists, who then reigned supreme in the minds of the contemporary generation of our intelligentsia. He brilliantly proved in this work that Plekhanoff was right when he asserted that Russia also would not escape the stage of capitalism. By means of statistics he showed that our country had since the 'nineties entered upon the capitalist stage. He gave a profound and subtle analysis of the



development of agriculture in Russia and the invasion of it by capitalism. With the aid of a mighty array of facts, Comrade Lenin analysed the whole economic structure of the country, both in the towns and on the land; and out of this dispassionate matter-of-fact analysis he brought out the revolutionary conclusions regarding the problems and tasks of the working class.

This book of Lenin's was acknowledged by bourgeois professors as a great scientific achievement. I myself, in 1902, when I was still a student in Paris, in the School of Social Sciences, founded by Professor Kovalevsky and others, heard from Professor Maxim Kovalevsky the greatest eulogy of Vladimir Ilyitch from his point of view. He said: "What a fine professor might have been made out of Lenin!" This in the mouth of Professor Kovalevsky was the very highest praise. Yes! out of Comrade Lenin there might have been made a fine professor, but out of him came the leader of the workers' Commune, and this, I think, is something greater than the most gifted of gifted professors. (Applause).

During the same period of exile, and on the eve of the day when he was obliged to journey out into exile, Comrade Lenin began another struggle on a different front. Fighting with one hand against the Populists in the person of Mikhailovsky and others, he then began a theoretical struggle against the so-called "legal" Marxism. At its head stood P. Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky and others who at present are leaders of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. This movement had a profound social foundation. The Liberals of the day were seeking a stratum of society on which they could lean in their struggle against Tsarism for bourgeois freedom. And they saw that outside the working class there was none at all. They saw that the Populists, with their old fashioned "theories," asserting that we should never have capitalism, were clearly in the

wrong. And they began to set their cap at Marxism, emasculating it of its revolutionary spirit and turning it into a "legal," tame Marxism.

In the struggle against the Populists the legal Marxists were for a time our allies. They also, like ourselves, fought against Mikhailovsky. And at one time we were united with them in a definite bloc. But the sharp ear of Comrade Lenin had already discovered false notes in the very first writings of P. Struve and Co. Lenin immediately said that this was an ally only for the nonce, that they would in the end betray us.

Noteworthy is the criticism by which Comrade Lenin exposed the well-known book of P. Struve, "Critical Remarks." Struve had for a long time been regarded as a Social-Democrat. He published a very sensational book, "Critical Remarks," directed against Mikhailovsky. This book was criticised by Plekhanoff and Lenin. Plekhanoff criticised it with the brilliance, peculiar to him, of a literary academician; Lenin criticised it differently. I feel and know, said Lenin, that in a year or two Struve will leave the working class and betray us to the bourgeoisie. Struve's book ended with the words: "Let us acknowledge our want of culture and place ourselves as apprentices under capitalism." These words need thinking over, said Comrade Lenin. See if this Struve does not end in becoming an apprentice, not of capitalism, but of capitalists. And though Struve was the comrade of Lenin, and rendered priceless services both to him and to the then existing Social-Democracy, yet Vladimir Ilyitch, with his characteristic firmness and consistency, no sooner heard a false note in Struve's words than he sounded the alarm. He began to fight against Struve, and under the pseudonym of Tulin came out with an article in a magazine which was burnt by the censor, in which he elucidated Mr. Struve in detail, taking to pieces every one of his phrases and every one of his propositions, and showing



that Mr. Peter Struve perhaps did not even realise it himself, and regarded himself as a genuine partisan of the Labour movement, but that in his modernism one could detect the very old tunes of the bourgeoisie. You are a bourgeois ideologist (Lenin argued), you will inevitably go over to the camp of the bourgeoisie and break with the working class. You yourself bear the guilt of this, because you look upon the working class as a means and not as an end. It is only important to you as a force against the Tsar, and you wish to make use of it, without giving it anything in return. Allow us not to allow you to do this. We have up till now fought against the Tsar and the bourgeoisie, but we proclaim yet another front: we will fight against "legal" Marxism. We stand for genuine revolutionary Marxism, and reject your emasculated "legal" Marxism.

Thus said Comrade Lenin.

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Thus was completed the work of Comrade Lenin before his exile to Siberia and during that exile itself. In the beginning of the 'nineties Comrade Lenin for the first time left the country.

Lenin twice went abroad. He lived abroad several years. His second period of emigration I and other comrades shared with him. And when we were heavy-hearted and discouraged, especially at the last period, during the war, when our hearts fell (those comrades who were abroad know what it means when for years you do not hear the Russian speech, when you are homesick for a native Russian word), Comrade Lenin used to say; why do you complain, is this a foreign exile? Plekhanoff and Axelrod, they were lonely in foreign exile when for the space of 25 years they strained in vain their eyesight to catch a glimpse of the first working-class revolutionary.

In point of fact, Vladimir Ilyitch himself pined in foreign

exile literally like a lion in a cage. He had nothing on which to expend his immense, inexhaustible energy, and he found salvation only through leading the life of a scholar. He did that which had been done in his time by Marx. He spent about fifteen hours a day in the library and at books, and it is not for nothing that he stands out to-day as one of the most learned Marxists, and generally, one of the most cultured people of our time.

But let us return to his first sojourn abroad.

In 1901 Lenin, together with a group of then kindred persons (Martoff, Potresoff), entered upon the publication of the paper "Iskra" (The Spark). This "Iskra" is an historical paper closely interwoven with the name of Comrade Lenin. Both friends and enemies spoke of Lenin's "Iskra." This was often the case. Everywhere, whenever and wherever Lenin worked, in organisations, as an editor, in the Central Committee, or, finally, now in the Council of People's Commissaries, to all these organisations inevitably struck the appellation "Lenin's." Yes, "Iskra" was Lenin's, and it did not lose by this, it only gained. (Applause). The first important article of Lenin in the "Iskra" was called "Where to begin." In this article Lenin developed the entire proximate programme of the Labour movement and the Russian revolution. He outlined in it, in their entirety, the foundations of our programme and revolutionary tactics.

Already in this first article of Lenin you will practically find almost the whole of the quintessence of Bolshevism. But this article served merely as a synopsis to the remarkable book of Lenin which was called "What to Do."

Round everything that Lenin wrote there is always seething strife. Nobody can remain indifferent to his writings. You can hate Lenin, you can love Lenin to distraction, but you cannot remain neutral. In the book "What to Do," Lenin stated and solved in a revolutionary spirit all the vexed questions of the movement of that



epoch. And for many months and years this book was challenging thought, was the centre of raging passions, was the subject of quarrels, and ultimately led to the formation of a split into two irreconcilable camps.

The "Iskra" declared a fight to the finish against the so-called "Economism." It fought with every variety of opportunism, including Economism, i.e. the future Menshevism. It conducted a most energetic fight against the political irresponsibility of the Socialist Revolutionaries, and never yet has it been so plain how clear-sighted in his attitude towards the Social-Revolutionaries was Comrade Lenin, who predicted as far back as 1902-3 the future of the Social-Revolutionary Party. Only think! Fifteen years before, when the party of the Social-Revolutionaries had only just been born, when it had in its ranks well-known members of the late "People's Will," when we had not yet that great political experience which was given to us by the revolution—what was then the position? There comes forward the party of the Social-Revolutionaries, asserting that it is fighting for Socialism, saying that it is more to the Left than the "Iskra." And lo! there gets up Comrade Lenin still quite young, and in face of the whole world dares throw at them the scornful words: "revolutionary adventurers." Lenin declared: "You, gentlemen of the Social-Revolutionaries, are representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, and nothing more." (Applause).

When Lenin said that the party of the Social-Revolutionaries was a party of the petty bourgeoisie there descended upon him thunder and lightning. It was said that Lenin was a bad character, that he was a misanthropist, and so forth. Now, indeed, you can see that it was a prophetic anticipation of that which is. (Applause). Now we know that there are no two more fateful letters in the Russian alphabet than the letters: S R. Why is the destiny of this party so fateful? Because, calling itself Socialist, in reality it is a petty bourgeois party.

Comrade Lenin was right when he said that these were no Socialists, but representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, that at best they were only revolutionary romantics, phantasts, and nothing more.

Now we have an immense, and precious experience of a decade and a half, the experience of the revolution of the year 1905, the experience of the revolution of the years 1917-18. But to have predicted the real truth fifteen years ago, to have determined the real value of the party of the Social-Revolutionaries at that time—this required almost a prophetic gift. For this it was necessary to have an immense revolutionary Marxist intuition, for this, in a word, it was necessary to be a Lenin. (Applause).

Lenin's "Iskra" carried on not merely a political fight, it also carried on an immense work of organisation. The "Iskra" was gathering the scattered debris of our party. Only in the beginning of the 'nineties arose a situation in which it was possible to think of the formation of a workers' party. Comrade Lenin placed himself also at the head of this practical organising work, and formed the organisation committee attached to the "Iskra." And Comrade Lenin, who bore the chief brunt of the literary labour in the "Iskra" and in the theoretical journal "Zarya" (The Dawn), at the same time became the soul of the organisation committee.

The wife of Comrade Lenin, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya-Ulyanova, was the secretary of the "Iskra," and secretary of the organisation committee. How much our party is indebted to her; of this one might and ought to speak separately. Here I will only say that, in all the work of Comrade Lenin as organiser of our party, a good deal of the credit is due to Nadezhda Konstantinovna. All written intercourse fell on her. At one time she carried on a correspondence with the whole of Russia.

Who among the older secret workers did not know Nadezhda Konstantinovna? To whom did not the receipt



of a letter from her mean joy? Who among us thought of her otherwise than with boundless confidence and most tender love?

Martoff in one of his spiteful polemics against Lenin once called Nadezhda Konstantinovna "the secretary of the super-centre, Lenin." Well, the whole Russian proletariat is now proud both of its "super-centre," and of his "secretary."

Lenin, assiduously, step by step, collected a secret organisation, and in 1903 we reached already the third congress of the party. Already in that historic congress, when the party was still united, when in its ranks stood Plekhanoff, Zassulitch, Axelrod, Martoff, Potressoff and others, already it became clear from the first minute of its labours that the true leader of our young party was Comrade Lenin.

Comrade Lenin is often represented as a man who cuts, carves, uses nothing but the surgeon's knife, who does not spare the unity of the proletarian ranks. But when the first signs of a fundamental split became apparent at the second congress it was Comrade Lenin who at first used all his influence to prevent a rupture. Lenin, indeed, knew how to value the unity of the labour movement.

Only that unity was to be a unity for the struggle for Socialism. The ideas of Socialism were to him dearest above all. And so at the second congress, as soon as he saw that his divergence from Martoff, Axelrod and the others was not a slight casual divergence; that there was a resurrection of the old opportunist tendency under a new flag; that there was rising again that same "legal" Marxism which Lenin had fought at the end of the 'nineties, that his former friend Martoff, with whom he had been intimate, his bosom friend, with whom he had been together in exile, that this Martoff began to sing flat; that Plekhanoff, whom until that time he had highly valued, began to surrender the principles of Marxism;

that this Plekhanoff was already giving a finger to opportunism and opportunism would soon have his whole hand; when Lenin saw all this, then the question was decided for him irrevocably. He said: "I shall stand alone, but I raise the standard of revolutionary Marxism." And he separated from Plekhanoff.

I happened at the time to be abroad. I as a young Social-Democrat, and two of my friends, were introduced to Plekhanoff. We were still young, quite fledglings, but we sympathised with all our heart with Comrade Lenin. We read his "What is to be Done?" and knew that it was the gospel of the adherents of the "Iskra." In face of this, Plekhanoff attempted, in his conversations with us, to pour ridicule upon Lenin. He would say: "You are going after him, but he has taken up such a line that in a few weeks he will only be fit to be put up as a scare-crow in the orchards. Lenin has raised the banner of revolt against me, Plekhanoff, against Zassulitch, and Deutch. Don't you understand that this is an unequal fight? Lenin is practically a dead man from the moment that he broke away from us, the leaders, the group of "Emancipation of Labour"; he is coming to the end of his tether." Such were Plekhanoff's arguments, and they no doubt made a certain impression upon us, the youngsters. Plekhanoff, while speaking, was severely contracting his eye-brows, and we felt very frightened. We would go to Comrade Lenin and innocently complain to him: "This and that is what Plekhanoff was saying." Then he would laugh and would console us: "He laughs best who laughs last; we shall yet fight, we shall see whom the workers will follow."

"One step forward, two steps backward"—such was the characteristic which Lenin gave of the evolution of the Menshevik wing of the party. One step forward—that was the advance from Economism to Iskraism; two steps back—that was the retrogression from Iskraism to the



liberal ideas of "legal" Marxism which had found their resurrection in Menshevism. No wonder Comrade Lenin took up a merciless fight against this relapse into the opportunist malady. As a counter-weight to the new "Iskra," which passed into the hands of the Mensheviks, and of which Lenin ceased to be co-editor, he established the first Bolshevik paper "Vperiod" (Forward). It was at first a very small sheet which was published on the pennies collected abroad. At that time the Mensheviks had in their hands a tremendous machinery, as well as the whole authority of Plekhanoff and other saints, innumerable papers and pamphlets as well as the central committee, the central organ and the council of the party. Comrade Lenin began to bombard this Menshevik fortress from his little machine-gun called "Vperiod." He fired so far, and he aimed so well, that in a pretty short time not a trace was left of Plekhanoff's heavy artillery, and by 1905 it became quite obvious that all that was alive in the Russian proletariat would follow the Bolsheviks.

In the summer of 1905 the first congress of the Bolsheviks (its official name was the third congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party) took place, the first historical meeting which laid the foundations of the present Communist Party. It was at that meeting that Lenin for the first time observed that in the forthcoming revolution we would no longer stop to form a bourgeois republic. Already at that time Comrade Lenin spoke about the rottenness of the European Social Democratic parliamentarism. Already at that time Lenin expressed the view that our revolution would stand on the border between the bourgeois and Socialist revolution.

It was difficult in those days to be a Bolshevik. Not only the Russian, but also the international conditions, pressed heavily upon us. Bebel, for instance, who was respected by Lenin as a working class leader of genius, would use every suitable and unsuitable occasion to re-

proach Lenin for being against Plekhanoff. How could Plekhanoff ever be an opportunist? At the same time Axelrod was busy telling everybody who was inclined to listen that Lenin was a second edition of Netchayeff,\* and that he in his fight against the "elder statesmen" was only pursuing ambitious aims. The entire atmosphere of the Social Democratic Party was hostile to Bolshevism.

On the eve of the third Congress (that is the first congress of the Bolsheviks), Bebel rendered the following service to the Mensheviks. When our congress met, he sent us a letter in the name of the Central Committee of the German Social Democracy, in which he said the following: "Children, don't you want to make peace? I, Bebel, offer you and the Mensheviks arbitration. Why this split? Submit your troubles to our court of arbitration." Such was the letter addressed by Bebel to Comrade Lenin, who brought it to the congress, and the congress declared: "We highly respect our Comrade Bebel, but on the question as to how to carry on the fight in our country against the Tsar and the bourgeoisie, we must ask permission to hold our own views. Permit us also to deal with the Mensheviks in a way which agents of the bourgeoisie deserve." Bebel was much amazed by the "impertinence" of our comrades, but there was nothing for him to do or to say, except to shrug his shoulders.

I quote this incident in order to show the kind of atmosphere, Russian and international, in which Lenin was fighting at the head of the then still inconsiderable army of the Socialist revolution.

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Already in the revolution of 1905 Lenin was playing a

\*Netchayeff was an early Russian revolutionary, an anarchist who got up a conspiracy at the end of the sixties by rather unscrupulous means, which included intercourse with the Tsar's police and fraudulent practice upon N's own comrades—all, of course, "for the good of the movement."—*Trans.*



leading part. This, to the outward gaze, was not so noticeable at that time, as it has been in the present revolution: You are aware that the first Petrograd Soviet of the Workers' Delegates in 1905 was formed by the Mensheviks, but in all its practical actions it followed, as a rule, the lead of the Bolsheviks. When the tide rose and the waters flooded the banks, the working class became aware that to form Soviets was virtually the same thing as to fight for power. Thereby the working class became Bolshevik.

After the revolution was defeated and the counter-revolution set in, when we began summing up our experiences, Martoff and his friends sat down by the waters of Babylon and started bemoaning the course of the first revolution. The Mensheviks themselves then had to admit that, alas, the revolution had been proceeding according to Bolshevik precepts; that the working class had unfortunately submitted to the lead of the Bolsheviks.

The Moscow armed insurrection, though defeated and crushed, had nevertheless been the apotheosis of the Bolshevik tactics during the revolution. We were defeated, and Plekhanoff's only comment on the event was the philistine phrase: "These people ought not to have taken up arms." Lenin's attitude towards that insurrection was different. To him there was no nobler and more honourable page in the history of the revolution than the Moscow armed insurrection. The first thing he did was to collect all the material relating to the affair. He wanted to elucidate all its features, down to the very smallest, and all its technical details. He wanted to ascertain the biography of everyone who took part in the insurrection. He endeavoured to interrogate every military expert who had taken part in it. He invited all those who took part in it to come forward and to explain to the working class and to the world at large, how the Moscow insurrection had been prepared and what had been the

reasons for its defeat. For Lenin realised to perfection that the Moscow insurrection was the first outpost skirmish with the bourgeois world. He realised the world-historical consequences of the Moscow insurrection, crushed and drowned in the blood of the workers, yet the first glorious working-class revolt against Tsardom and capitalism in a most backward country.

I repeat that the part played by Lenin in the revolution of 1905 was colossal. He only attended the meetings of the Petrograd Soviet once or twice, and he would often tell us how he sat in the balcony high up and unperceived by the public, looking down on the workers' delegates assembled in the hall of the Free Economic Society. He lived at that time in Petrograd in hiding, the party having forbidden him to come out too much in the open. Our official representative on the central committee of the Soviet was A. A. Bogdanoff. When it became known that the Soviet was going to be arrested, we forbade Lenin to attend the last historical session in order that he might not be arrested. He only saw the Soviet in 1905 once or twice, but I am firmly of the opinion that even then, when he was looking down from his seat in the balcony upon the first Labour Parliament, the idea of the Soviet State must have already been dawning upon his mind. Perhaps, in those days he already foresaw, in a dream as it were, the time when there would be a Soviet State; when the Soviets, that prototype of a Socialist proletarian State, would become the sole authority in the country.

Already in those days of 1905 Lenin was teaching that the Soviets were not a fortuitous organisation which had sprung up the day before yesterday and would vanish the day after to-morrow; that they were not a common everyday organisation somewhat similar to a trade union, but an organisation which was opening a new page in the history of the international proletariat, in the history of the entire human race. (Applause.)



No one was more interested in the history of the Petrograd Soviet than Comrade Lenin. Though he formally had taken the least direct part in its labours, he, nevertheless, appreciated better than any of us what it meant. For that reason he treated the Soviet watchword with the utmost circumspection. Thus, in 1916, during the war, when we in Switzerland got to know that a revolutionary movement was beginning here at Petrograd, and that our comrades had begun to pass round the word about the reorganisation of the Soviets, Comrade Lenin wrote, in articles and letters, that the organisation of a Soviet was a great slogan, and must not be frivolously played with. It must only be raised when the workers were determined to go to the end; to stake their heads on victory and to proclaim that the moment of a real proletarian revolution, the moment to capture all power, had arrived. Then, and then only, was it permissible to speak about Soviets, since Soviets could only exist if the workers assumed all power, since the Soviets were the form of a proletarian state, since the Soviets were the undivided rule of the working class.

What Lenin was insisting upon was that the Soviets were not the ordinary class organisation, whose purpose, according to the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, was to fight for the economic demands of the working class on the basis of capitalism only. In his opinion such Soviets would be doomed in advance. In fact, no Soviets were needed for such a purpose. In his view, the Soviets were organisations for the seizure of State power, and for transforming the workers into the ruling class. That is why he again and again told the Petrograd workers in the course of 1916: "Ask yourselves a hundred times whether you are prepared, whether you are strong enough; look carefully before you jump. To organise Soviets means to declare a war to a finish, to declare civil war upon the bourgeoisie, to begin the proletarian revolution."

And Comrade Lenin has remained faithful and true to himself in his view.

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But let us go back. The year 1906 was followed by a period of stagnation, by the dark era of the counter-revolution. The working class was digesting the lessons of the first revolution. In reply to the Menshevik philosophy of the first revolution and the causes of its defeat, we gave our own philosophy of the revolution. We were obliged to give it in our "underground" papers, leaflets, and pamphlets. We were not in a position to publish, with the sanction of the censorship, five big volumes, as the Mensheviks did. We should not have found any publisher, we should have been boycotted by the entire censored press, and, in fact, we should not have been allowed to say a single word by the Tsar's censorship. Lenin at that time was depicted as a sort of monster who could have no place in respectable society.

We Bolsheviks were not at that time allowed to come out in the "legal" literature. We could only help ourselves by means of the free printing press abroad.

The Mensheviks at that time represented the entire revolution of 1905 as a wholesale error, as a wholesale chaos, and elemental madness. The workers, forsooth, were themselves responsible for the defeat, because they had gone "too far" in their demands. Lenin's reply was: "You have failed to grasp the meaning of this movement! It was a great revolution, and by no means a chaos. It was a great revolution, not because there was the manifesto of October 30th,\* not because the bourgeoisie began to move, but because there was, albeit unsuccessful, an armed insurrection of the workers in Moscow, because for the space of one month a Petrograd Soviet flitted before the eyes of the world proletariat. And the revolution will

\*By which the Tsar proclaimed a constitution.—*Trans.*



yet arise once more; the Soviets will be reborn and will win." . . . .

In connection with this view of Lenin, that the revolution had been a great revolution, I remember a little incident. Last year, when we came here, we at first were overwhelmed by the colossal swing of the movement, and extolled even the March revolution sometimes as a great one. I remember how in an article in May, 1917, I, obeying an impulse, again called the March revolution "great." Comrade Lenin, who was at that time with Comrade Kameneff and myself, joint editor of the "Pravda," began assiduously to strike out this word. When I asked jestingly why this ruthlessness against this particular word, Comrade Lenin severely took me to task. "What sort of a 'great' revolution was that? It will become a great one when we shall have expelled this counter-revolutionary, Kerensky, and wrested all power from the hands of the bourgeoisie, and the Petrograd Soviet shall be no longer a talking-shop, but the sole authority in the capital. Then, indeed, our revolution will be a 'great' one; then, indeed, you may even write the 'greatest revolution of all times.'" (Applause.)

I have dwelt but little on the work of Lenin in the years of the counter-revolution; yet this period was one of the most brilliant in his activity. One had to live through those difficult times in distant foreign lands in order to appreciate all the services rendered by Lenin to the cause. Think for a moment of the foul atmosphere, our emigration in the years 1908-10. Lenin went into his second foreign exile in 1907, while I and my other comrades were summoned to go abroad in the autumn of 1908, after we had been released from prison. It was mainly owing to the efforts of Lenin that we established our "illegal" papers, first at Geneva, and then in Paris: the "Proletariat" and the "Social Democrat." All round there was a complete débâcle. There was foulness in all emigrant circles. The

old leaders who had gone grey under the revolutionary banner no longer believed in anything. Pornography captured our entire literature, and a spirit of apostasy had pervaded us. The notorious "liquidation" movement\* was raising its head, and Stolypin was celebrating his orgies. It seemed as if there would be no end of that!

At such times true leaders are recognised for what they are worth. Lenin was at that time (as, for the rest, throughout his exile) suffering great personal privations and living in poverty; was ill, and fed badly—more particularly during his stay in Paris; but he remained as cheerful as anybody could be. He stood steadfastly and bravely at his glorious post. He alone contrived to collect a close and intimate circle of fighters, whom he would cheer up by saying: "Don't be disheartened; this darkness will pass, the muddy wave will ebb away, a few years will pass and we shall be borne on the crest of the wave, and the proletarian revolution will be born again." The émigrés of that time, more particularly the Menshevik intellectuals, who formed the prevailing element, treated us with marked hostility, declaring that we were a small sect, the members of which could be counted on the five fingers of one hand. There was a special comic paper published in Paris, which jeered at Bolshevism and exercised its humour on such subjects as that "a reward would be offered of half a kingdom to the person who could name a fourth Bolshevik in addition to Lenin, Zinovieff, and Kameneff." The Bolsheviks were, forsooth, a set of bears sucking their own paws while life was moving past them. The co-operatives, the trade unions, the censored press were all opposed to the Bolsheviks, while Lenin and his disciples were sitting in a contemplative mood, attaching their faith to the advent of a new Messiah and a new revolution which would never arrive.

\*A movement predominant among the Mensheviks for "winding up" all revolutionary activity.—*Trans.*



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In those difficult times Lenin rendered to the working class services perhaps even greater than ever before. At present, in our own days, a tremendous flood has risen and borne millions of individuals, ready to fight and to die. In those days everything was asleep, like in a cemetery. Stolypin's régime was weighing upon the working class like the lid of a coffin. The "older statesmen," after the type of Axelrod and Co., were chanting the dirges of the revolution and of the old illegal Labour Party. It was, indeed, a great merit to have raised the banner of the revolution in such times, to have fought all the Revisionism and Opportunism, to have preserved his faith in triumph, and awaited its moment; to have worked and worked without rest or haste.

Lenin was fighting for the party, but at the same time he secluded himself in the library. It is needless to say that Marx has ever been the favourite writer of Lenin, just as his favourite Russian author has always been Chernyshevsky.\* Lenin knows his Marx and Engels from the first to the last letter. He knows them in a way as only two or three persons, I think, know them in the world. And Lenin is one of the very few who have advanced the theory of Marx and have been able to fructify it by some new elements and to adapt it to the new conditions of a new era fraught with the greatest consequences. How proud Marx would have been of Lenin, did he live to-day! Lenin never allowed Marx to be insulted by anybody. The Russian so-called "critics" of Marx in their literary exercises invariably came up against the impregnable fortress called Lenin, and would invariably suffer great damage from his guns. Lenin fully sustained his reputation even when the philosophical views of Marx began to be subjected to "criticism."

In those days Comrade Lenin carried out a tremendous piece of creative work. Those days were marked by a

\*A great Russian Socialist thinker (1828-89).—*Trans.*

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sort of literary spoliation of the dead, by an unprecedented literary demoralisation. Attempts were made to smuggle, under the flag of Marxism, the ideas of bourgeois philosophy into working-class audiences. Lenin spent two years in the Paris National Library, and carried out such a mass of work that even bourgeois professors who attempted to sneer at the philosophical studies of Lenin, themselves admitted that they could not understand how one man had contrived to read such a mass of books in the course of two years. How, indeed, could Lenin succeed in this domain when "we," who had studied at our fathers' expense, who had spent thirty years in our scientific careers, who had worn out so many arm-chairs, who had perused such truck-loads of books, had understood nothing at all in them? . . .

In those two years Comrade Lenin was able to write a serious work on philosophy, which in due course will occupy an honourable place in the history of the struggle for revolutionary Marxism. He fought as passionately for Communism in the most abstract domain of theory as he fights now in the field of practical politics. Perhaps but few amongst the Petrograd workers have read this philosophical work of Lenin, but know you all that in this book the foundations of Communism were laid. He fought in this book all the bourgeois influences, in their most subtle and elusive forms, and succeeded in defending the materialist conception of history against the most cultured representatives of the bourgeoisie, and those writers among the Social Democrats who had succumbed to those influences.

Then came the years 1910-11. A fresh wind began to blow, and it became evident in 1911 that the Labour movement was being re-born. The Lena days\* opened a new page in the history of our movement. At that time we

\*The wholesale massacre of strikers on the Lena Goldfields (a British company), in 1910.—*Trans.*



had already at Petrograd a "legal" paper called "Zvezda" (Star), at Moscow a monthly periodical, "Mysl" (Thought) and a small labour group in the Duma. The principal worker in these papers and behind the Duma group was Lenin.

Lenin managed to teach a few Labour members of the Duma the methods of revolutionary parliamentarism. You ought to have heard the conversations between Lenin and our young deputies when he was propounding to them the lessons in such parliamentarism. Simple Petrograd proletarians (Badayeff and others) would come to us and say: "We want to engage in serious legislative work; we want to consult you about the budget, about such and such Bill, about certain amendments to certain Bills introduced by the Cadets," etc. In reply Comrade Lenin laughed heartily, and when they, somewhat abashed, would ask what was the matter, Comrade Lenin would reply to Badayeff: "My dear man, what do you want a budget, an amendment, a Bill for? You are workmen, and the Duma exists for the ruling classes. You simply step forward and tell all Russia in simple language about the life and toil of the working class. Describe the horrors of capitalist rule, summon the workers to make a revolution, and fling into the face of this reactionary Duma that its members are scoundrels and exploiters!" (Applause.) "You had better introduce a 'Bill' stating that in three years' time we shall take you all, landlords and capitalists, and hang you on the lamp-posts. That would be a real Bill!" (Applause.) Such were the lessons in "parliamentarism" which Comrade Lenin would propound to the deputies. At first Comrade Badayeff and others used to find them rather queer. The entire parliamentary surroundings were weighing upon our comrades. There, in the hall of the Taurida Palace, where the Duma was meeting, all were sitting in magnificent frock coats, and the Ministers sat around in places of honour—and these poor

deputies should all of a sudden break out in such nasty talk! Later on, however, our deputies assimilated the lessons, and Lenin's enjoyment was boundless when he saw our deputy, the simple mechanic Badayeff, come out on the rostrum in the Taurida Palace and tell all those Rodziankos, Volkonskies, and Purishkevitches all that he had been taught by the teacher of the working class, Comrade Lenin. (Applause.)

In 1912 a new life began. As soon as it became possible to publish here in Petrograd a legal paper, we migrated from Paris to Galicia in order to be nearer to Petrograd. At the January (1912) Conference, which took place at Prague, the Bolsheviks consolidated the ranks which had suffered so heavily at the hands of the counter-revolutionaries. The party came back to life again, and, of course, Lenin played a leading part. At the instance of the new central committee, Comrade Lenin and myself went to stay at Cracow. There we began to receive visits from comrades from Petrograd, Moscow, and other towns. Communication was established with Petrograd, and the arrangements were soon so perfected that very seldom the "Pravda" would appear without some contribution from Lenin. You have been brought up on those articles, and you know what those papers, "Zvezda" and "Pravda," were for the working class. Those were the first swallows of the coming Communist spring. Right and left Comrade Lenin hit our enemies in the columns of those papers, and it is owing to his articles, counsels, and private letters to Petrograd, that the "Pravda" soon became a sounding board for all questions of the day. Our machinery became so perfect that we frequently managed to have a conference of the Petrograd and Cracow bureaus of the central committee before every important meeting of trade unions or other labour organisations.

I remember the first large general meeting of the Petrograd Metal Workers in 1913. Two hours after the list



of our candidates to the committee of the Union was adopted by the meeting (which was at that time an extraordinary success) Comrade Lenin was already in possession of congratulatory telegrams from the Metal Workers on the matter. Comrade Lenin was living at that time thousands of miles away, but he was the very soul of the proletarian Petrograd. The same thing was happening as in 1906-7, when Comrade Lenin was residing in Finland, at Kuokalla, and where weekly pilgrimages were performed by us in order to receive his advice. He was actually guiding the Labour movement at Petrograd from his little village in Finland. He was now doing the same thing from Cracow, guiding not only the Petrograd, but the whole Russian Bolshevik movement.

The telegrams which are now congratulating Lenin on his convalescence and conveying the senders' sympathy on the occasion, contain very frequently the name "leader." Many a tender word has been found by our workers to express their sentiments towards Lenin. All sorts of tender names appear in telegrams. He is the "torch," he is the "beacon," he is the "beloved one," etc., but most frequently of all one name occurs in the telegrams, the clear, strong, and perhaps rather harsh word "leader." He is really the chosen one of millions. He is a leader by the grace of God; his is the genuine figure of a leader such as arises once in five hundred years in the life of the human race.

\* \* \* \*

I should like to say yet a few words about Lenin's attitude on the war. He had long ceased to believe in the European Social Democracy; he knew well that something was rotten in Denmark. He had long been saying about official European Social Democrats that they were carrying on a contraband trade in rotten opportunist goods. When the war broke out we were living in a God-forsaken little mountain village in Galicia. I

remember having had a bet with him. I said to him: "You will see, the German Democrats will not dare vote against the war, but will abstain in the vote on the war credits." Comrade Lenin replied: "No, they are not such scoundrels after all. They will not, of course, fight the war, but they will, to ease their conscience, vote against the credits in order that the working class might not rise against them." In this case Lenin was wrong, and so was I. Neither of us had taken the full measure of the flunkeyism of the Social Patriots. The European Social Democrats proved complete bankrupts. They all voted for the war credits. When the first number of the "Vorwärts," the organ of the German Social Democrats, arrived with the news that they had voted the war credits, Lenin at first refused to believe. "It cannot be," he said, "it must be a forged number. Those scoundrels, the German bourgeois, have specially published such a number of the 'Vorwärts' in order also to compel us to go against the International." Alas, it was not so. It turned out that the Social Patriots really had voted the war credits. When Lenin saw it, his first word was: "The Second International is dead."

At that time those words had the effect of a bursting bomb. At present we all see clearly that this is so, the Second International was dead. It is now as obvious to us as the A B C; but think only how great the prestige of this International had been before the war. It, at least, on paper, had counted several million members and contained in its ranks such authorities as Kautsky, Vandervelde, Valliant, Guesde, Plekhanoff. And all of a sudden a Russian Marxist gets up and announces to all the world, "The Second International is dead, and let it rest in peace." The howling and the protests of the acknowledged "leaders" of the Second International against the impertinent Bolsheviks knew no bounds. It was monstrous, they declared, that Lenin should so insult the



entire Socialist world. Herr Scheidemann says so even now. Recently at Berlin the Imperial Chancellor met the leaders of the parties with reference to the supplementary treaty between Russia and Germany. Herr Ebert, Scheidemann's henchman, was the only one to vote against this treaty, because, forsooth, Lenin and his friends were disgracing the banner of Socialism in Russia. Scheidemann knows very well that he has a serious enemy in the person of Lenin. He knows well that if he is one day to hang on a lamp-post — it will come to this, I can guarantee you (Applause)—he will be owing it, to a very large extent, among others, to Comrade Lenin.

Lenin was one of the authors of the main thesis of the resolution of the Stuttgart International Congress of 1907. Jointly with Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin invited the Stuttgart Congress to proclaim that should an imperialist war begin, our business would be to raise a revolution, that is, a civil war. After protracted arguments, the commission of the Congress adopted his decision, but in different words. Lenin told us at the time how he had been arguing with Bebel about those words. According to Lenin, Bebel had accepted the idea, but demanded great care in formulating it in order not to alarm the enemy before the time.

Then the imperialist war actually came, but when Lenin now repeated the Stuttgart resolution, when he now submitted to the leaders of the Second International Bebel's I O U. the leaders only waived it aside and passed to the order of the day, that is, to their respective governments.

I remember the first manifesto of our party on the war. Naturally, it was drawn up principally by Lenin himself, as for the rest all our most important party documents were. When we translated it into various European languages and read them out to various comrades, even the Swiss Internationalist Grimm and the Rumanian revolutionary Rakovsky, who is now in our ranks, were very

indignant. They were almost horror-struck when they read the words that the imperialist war must be transformed into a civil war.

To-day it is all as simple as A B C. We are all doing it, we are all practically transforming the imperialist war into a civil war, but at that time it seemed monstrous. We were told that only an anarchist could preach such things, and virtually war was declared upon us. Even at Zimmerwald not only moderate men, but also men like Rakovsky and the Italian Serrati were bitterly opposed to us, so that very fierce conflicts ensued at various stages. I well remember how the headstrong Rakovsky was nearly taking off his coat to fight Lenin and me for our opinion that Martoff was an agent of the bourgeoisie. "How dare you say such things," they shouted at us; "we have known Martoff for the last twenty years." But we replied: "We know Martoff as well as you and we are certain that all that is honest among the Russian workers will follow us and will oppose the war, while Martoff is championing bourgeois ideas."

But, of course, all these petty incidents are of no particular importance. I only mention them to show you how dead, how stagnant was the European Social Democracy at the beginning of the war. No one was prepared to fight. All had become habituated to the old tracks of legalism and parliamentarism; all the old leaders had faith in "law," and made of it a fetish. Tremendous efforts were needed to make an impression even among the Zimmerwaldians. I remember a clash at Zimmerwald between Lenin and Ledebour. Ledebour argued: "It is all right for you here living abroad to issue appeals for a civil war, I should have liked to see how you would have done it if you had lived in Russia." If Ledebour still remembers those words, I think he must feel very much ashamed of them now. But Comrade Lenin coolly replied to him: "When Marx was drawing up his Com-



munist Manifesto he also was living abroad, and only narrow-minded philistines could reproach him for that. I now live abroad, because I was sent here by the Russian workers, but when the time arrives, we shall know how to stand at our posts. . . ."

And our Comrade Lenin kept his word.

Yet at the beginning of the war Lenin found very little sympathy even among those Socialists who were opposed to the war. But how is it now? At present we can say without exaggeration that all that is honest in the International regards Lenin as its leader and banner-bearer. Lazzari, the leader of the Italian workers, who has grown grey under the red banner, and who at Zimmerwald was fighting Lenin, is now going to prison for three years for circulating Lenin's appeals in Italy. Mehring, Clara Zetkin, the best among the German Internationalists, who used to fight Lenin in the olden days, now render him the tribute of their greatest respect. Or listen to what has been said about Lenin by men like Gorter, Höglund, Blagoeff, Loriot, and Serrati. There can be no greater satisfaction for Comrade Lenin than the knowledge that he, by his work, has captivated the minds and hearts of such men as all those prominent leaders of labour in various countries.

Comrade Lenin became the leader of the Third International, which is now being born. At first many virtuous so-called Socialists ridiculed the idea that Lenin should put forward his candidature for the leadership of the Third International, saying that he is aspiring to the honour of being the successor of Bakunin. But who will now laugh when we say that the leader of the Third International is none else than Lenin? The compromise-mongers have now no inclination to laugh. They would rather cry, because they know that the Third International is a living fact, although owing to the state of siege it has not come into existence formally. And they also know that the new

International has in the person of Lenin a sufficiently strong leader, far-seeing, courageous, such as the working class International properly needs.

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The part played by Comrade Lenin from the beginning of the war has been quite exceptional. He was the first to begin collecting circles of Internationalists, and it was a remarkable sight how he was devoting his inexhaustible energy to this work in Switzerland. He lived first at Berne and then Zürich. The Swiss Social Democratic Party was at that time soaked through and through by opportunism and patriotism, and only a small group of workers rallied round us. Comrade Lenin would spend much time and strength in order to organise some ten or twenty individuals belonging to the Zürich working class youth. I lived at that time in another Swiss town, but I well remember the enthusiasm which Comrade Lenin devoted to this small work. He used to write us numberless letters, urging us all to work among the Swiss, and rejoiced like a child when he was able to announce that at Zürich he had succeeded in getting into the organisation of the Left Social Democrats seven youthful proletarians, and, might, perhaps, succeed in getting an eighth.

Of course the official Swiss Social Democratic Party looked on this work of Lenin's askance. Greulich and Co. would declare that Lenin was corrupting the entire working class movement by his Russian "anarchism." Indeed, Comrade Lenin was corrupting it as much as he could. (Applause and laughter.) The philistine Swiss Government was then ready to expel Lenin as an undesirable alien, but now we hear from our Swiss Socialist comrade, Moor, that the Swiss Government has placed in the museum as an historical document the paper which it exacted from us as a guarantee that we should behave "decently" in Switzerland. I shall not be surprised



if the Swiss bourgeoisie, who are showing their lakes and mountains for a franc per head, should soon charge five francs for showing the autograph signature of Lenin.

He, at that time, in the years 1915-17, was living in Switzerland quite a secluded life. The war and the collapse of the International had deeply affected him, and many, who knew him before, were surprised at the change which had taken place in him since the war. He never was very tender towards the bourgeoisie, but since the war his hatred of the bourgeoisie became concentrated and sharp like a dagger. He seemed even to have changed in his face.

He then lived at Zürich, in the poorest quarter, in the house of a shoemaker, in a sort of garret. He chased, as it were, after every proletarian in order to proclaim to him that the present war was an imperialist slaughter, that the honour of the proletariat demanded to fight this war to a finish, that the arms must not be laid down until the working class had risen and destroyed the imperialist bandits (prolonged applause).

The Bureau of the Zimmerwald Left, in which the principal part was played by Lenin, issued in German and French several leaflets, pamphlets, and three numbers of the periodical, "Vorbote." It goes without saying that Lenin's propaganda was not to the taste of the International bourgeoisie. The German bourgeois professors would write entire books to announce that a certain lunatic had arisen, who was preaching a mad propagandist doctrine. But we laughed and said, "Why then do you write books and articles, why concern yourselves with the ravings of a lunatic?" But Comrade Lenin steadily and quietly pursued his labours, and now things have reached such a pass that the German bourgeoisie has had to sign a treaty with Comrade Lenin as representing hundreds of millions of peasants and workers of entire Russia. We shall yet, comrades, see the moment when our proletariat

through its leader Lenin will dictate its will to old Europe, when Comrade Lenin will, perhaps, make treaties with the Government of Karl Liebknecht, and when Lenin will help the German workers to draw up the first Socialist decree in Germany (applause).

In March, 1917, Comrade Lenin returned to Russia. You remember, comrades, the witches' sabbath which broke out when Lenin and ourselves, his disciples, came from abroad through Germany. What a howl there was about the celebrated "sealed carriage." As a matter of fact, Lenin entertained towards the German Imperialism a hatred as fierce as towards the other Imperialisms. At the beginning of the war the Austrian Government had arrested Lenin, and he spent two weeks in a Galician arrest-house. When a prominent member of Scheidemann's party wanted to enter our carriage (which, as a matter of fact, was not sealed) in order to welcome us, the gentleman was told purposely by Lenin that we had no inclination to talk with traitors, and would give him a thrashing if he came to us.

The Mensheviks and Socialist revolutionaries who at first proudly resisted the temptation afterwards went the same way. So far as Lenin was concerned, the matter was simple: all bourgeois Governments were bandits; we had no choice, we could not go to Russia in any other way.

I shall not dwell here in detail on the part which Lenin has played here at Petrograd from the beginning of our revolution. You have seen his work, you have watched it as closely as I. You know the part played by Lenin in the July days of 1917. For him the question of the necessity of the seizure of power by the proletariat had been settled from the first moment of our present revolution, and the question was only about the choice of a suitable opportunity. In the July days our entire central committee was opposed to the immediate seizure of power



Lenin was of the same opinion. But when on July 16th the wave of popular revolt rose high, Lenin became alert, and here, upstairs, in the refreshment room of the Taurida Palace, a small conference took place at which Trotsky, Lenin, and myself were present. Lenin laughingly asked us, "Shall we not attempt now?" and he added: "No, it would not do to assume power now, as nothing will come out of it, the soldiers at the front being largely on the other side and would come and massacre the Petrograd workers." As a matter of fact, you will remember in those July days Kerensky did succeed in bringing over soldiers from the front against us. What became ripe two or three months later was still immature in July, and the capture of power at that time might have been fatal. Lenin realised this before everybody else. At any rate, Lenin never hesitated for a moment on the question as to whether the proletariat, in our revolution, ought to seize the reins of power, or not. All his hesitations turned round the question as to whether it could not be done earlier.

You know how things developed subsequently. We passed through a time when it seemed that everything was lost. Comrade Lenin for a moment even doubted whether the Soviets, corrupted by the compromise-mongers, could play a decisive part, and he gave out the watchword that we might perhaps have to seize power without the Soviets. But he never for a moment doubted that sooner or later the power would be in our hands, and that it was necessary to hurl the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries to the ground.

At first, during the July days, we could not realise what was occurring. One night, on July 16th, Comrade Lenin alone came into the editorial offices of the "Pravda" to hand over a manuscript. Half an hour afterwards, ensigns were already sacking those offices. On the morning of July 18th Lieber took me to the military staff of the district to obtain redress in the matter of the sacking of the

offices of the "Pravda." General Polovtseff, the head of the Staff, received me with great respect. He at that time did not yet know what to do with us. But an hour later the Bolsheviks were being arrested and massacred.

Then the persecutions started. Lenin and myself went into hiding. We had formerly decided to be arrested—such was still our faith in the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist Revolutionaries. But the party did not permit us to do so. We, therefore, decided to go on hiding ourselves. A week later Comrade Lenin told me: "How could we have been so silly as to think for one moment of trusting to this band and getting ourselves arrested? There is no other way but to fight this band ruthlessly." (Applause.)

\* \* \* \*

In the same way as Comrade Lenin in July, 1917, wisely declared that there must be no attempt to seize power, so after the Korniloff rebellion—especially since the end of September, 1917, Lenin began urging the workers to seize power, or else it would be too late.

When, after that rebellion, the so-called Democratic Conference assembled at Petrograd, Lenin at first came out with an article on "Compromise." He invited for the last time the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries to break with the bourgeoisie, to renounce their policy of treason, and to come to a settlement with the working class with a view to action against the followers of Korniloff. But these two parties were rotten to the core. They had already sold their souls and could not accept Lenin's invitation. Thereupon Lenin sent a letter from his Finnish exile to the central committee of our party saying that the time had come to drop all procrastination, that it was necessary to surround the Alexandra Theatre (where the Democratic Conference was holding its sessions), to disperse all the scum there by force, and to seize power.



Our central committee at that time did not agree with Comrade Lenin. Almost everybody thought that it was too early, and that the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries still had a large following. Lenin then, without hesitating long, left his asylum, and without consulting anybody, without considering the fears of his friends, came to Petrograd in order to preach an immediate rising. Kerensky and Avxentyeff were at that time issuing writs for the arrest of Lenin, while Lenin, from his underground hiding, was preparing a rebellion, arguing with those who hesitated, castigating those who were afraid, and writing and agitating for an early rising. And he succeeded.

At present everybody sees that Lenin was right. It was all a matter of touch and go. If we had not taken power into our hands, Savinkoff and Paltchinsky would have crushed us a month later. The question was raised by history in no ambiguous manner. Either we or they. Either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, mad with fear and hatred towards the workers, or the dictatorship of the proletariat pitilessly sweeping away the bourgeoisie.

Now, of course, it is all clear, but at that time, amidst the whirlpool of events it required the exact eye of a Lenin, his genius and intuition, in order to declare: "Not a week later, now or never." And it also required the unbending strength of will of a Lenin to surmount all the obstacles and to start at the appointed time the greatest revolution ever known in history. It is not that Comrade Lenin did not realise the tremendous difficulties with which the working class would be confronted after the conquest of power. Lenin knew all this to perfection. From the very first days of his arrival at Petrograd he had been carefully watching the progressive economic ruin. He valued the acquaintance of every bank clerk, trying to penetrate into the details of the bank business. He knew well the food and other difficulties. In one of his most remarkable

books: "Will the Bolsheviks be able to keep the State power?" Comrade Lenin dwelt in detail on these difficulties. It is true that the latter proved still more formidable than even Lenin anticipated.

But no other way was open to the working class than the one trodden in November.

Both on the question of the nationalisation of the banks and on that of our food policy, as well as military policy, the decisive word was said by Lenin. He alone drew up in all its details the scheme of practical measures in all these domains long before November 7th. Clearness, precision, concreteness—such are the chief features in Lenin's work, and he alone has generalised all these individual measures in his work on the "State," which, to my mind, is the most important one after Marx's "Capital." The Soviet State has found in Lenin not only its chief political leader, practical organiser, ardent propagandist, poet and singer, but also its principal theoretician, its Karl Marx. The November revolution—in so far as even in a revolution one may, and indeed *must* speak of the part played by the individual, as well as the part played in connection with it by our party—is to the extent of nine-tenths the work of Lenin. If anybody could bring into line all those who doubted or hesitated, it was Lenin.

I can say this for myself, that if I shall repent in my life of anything, it will not be of the fifteen years that I have been working under the guidance of Comrade Lenin, but of those few November days when I thought that Lenin was too much in a hurry, was forcing events, was committing a mistake, and that I would have to oppose him. It is now as clear as noonday that if the working class, under the guidance of Lenin, had not seized power in time, we should, a few weeks later, have had the dictatorship of the most ruthless, most unscrupulous bourgeois rascals. (Loud and continued applause.) It is known now that it had been decided to massacre us all



by the time of the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, and if the generals had had more soldiers at their disposal, they would have done so. Even after November 7th the Right Socialist Revolutionaries intended to massacre us, and one of their members, Massloff, even recruited soldiers for the purpose. He admitted very recently himself, that he had succeeded in scraping together only 5,000 champions of a very doubtful quality. There was the will, but there was not the way.

Comrade Lenin calculated the moment to perfection. He did not want to delay even for a week, and knew how to raise the question to a direct issue. He wrote article after article, publicly, over his signature, in a paper which everybody could read, openly appealing for an armed rising, and fixing a definite date. And all this, while Kerensky was still in power and seemed to many to be still very strong. Lenin challenged the entire bourgeoisie and all compromise-mongers, telling them that to-morrow he and his friends would overthrow them. And everybody knew that on the lips of Lenin this was not an empty threat, that it would be followed by deed. This could only have been done by Lenin.

\* \* \* \*

And what about those memorable days of Brest, the days of bitter disappointment! How difficult, how painfully difficult was it at that time to make a decision! I cannot even imagine what would have happened if we had not had Lenin with us at the time. Who else could have assumed this terrific responsibility of acting against the overwhelming majority of the Soviets, against a considerable portion of our party, and at one time against even a majority of the central committee of the party? Only Lenin could lift this burden on his shoulders, and only he could have been followed by those who were hesitating. It was Lenin who was fated to save Petrograd, Russia, our party, our revolution. Now there are but

few clever persons who would attempt to ridicule Lenin's theory of "breathing-space." It is now clear to everybody that it was the only right thing to do, to yield to the enemies space in order to gain time. . . .

That is why the man who has accomplished such work is entitled to immortality. That is why a blow directed against him is received by everybody as a blow directed against themselves. Comrade Trotsky was right when he said in Moscow: "When Comrade Lenin lay cruelly wounded and struggling with death, our own lives seemed so superfluous, so unimportant. . . ."

Comrade Lenin was frequently compared with Marat, but fate was kinder to him than to Marat, who became dear to his people after his death. Our teacher Lenin was within an ace of death. He was dear enough to our people even before that attempt, but now, after that treacherous attempt, he will become a thousand times dearer to the hearts of the working class. Marat lived still in the memory of his people a long time after his physical life had been cut, but Lenin will live long yet, not only in our minds and hearts, but also in our ranks, in order to fight with us and to carry to a triumphant end the first Workers' Socialist Revolution. (Storm of applause.)

Yes, a Marat closely connected with the millions of the town and country proletariat. That is Lenin. Take the fanatical devotion to the people which distinguished Marat; take his simplicity, his intimate knowledge of the soul of the people, take his elemental faith in the inexhaustible strength of the "lower depths," take all this and add to it the first-class education of a Marxist, an iron will, an acute analytical mind, and you will get Lenin such as we know him now. A revolutionary Social Democrat is just a Jacobin who has tied up his fate with the most advanced class of modern times, with the proletariat—such was Lenin's reply in 1904 to the Mensheviks



who were accusing him of Jacobinism. The figure of the proletarian "Jacobin," Lenin, will yet throw into shade the glory of the most glorious of the Jacobins of the time of the Great French Revolution.

August Bebel was never forgiven by the German bourgeoisie for having once declared in the Reichstag: "I hate your bourgeois order; yes, I am a deadly enemy of your entire bourgeois society." And the same Bebel used to say: "When I am praised by the bourgeoisie, I ask myself, 'You, old fellow, what folly have you committed to have merited the praises of these cannibals?'" But Comrade Lenin will never have to put himself such a question. He is quite guaranteed against that. He has never been praised by the bourgeoisie who had been persecuting him with a wild hatred all during the long years of his captivity, and he is proud of it. At the moment of greatest crisis Lenin is fond of repeating, as he did on the eve of the November Revolution, the poet's words: "We hear sounds of approval not in the sweet murmur of praise, but in the wild shouts of rage." This is characteristic of Lenin, who is entirely reflected in the verses. Lenin quotes poetry but seldom, but in this case he used it with good reason. The wild shouts of rage of the enemies of the working class have ever been the best music to Lenin's ear. The greater the rage of the enemies, the more assured Lenin is. Again, Lenin is fond of comparing our revolution with a rushing railway engine. Indeed, our railway engine rushes with a dizzy swiftness, but then our driver manages the engine, as no one else can. His eye is sharp, and his hand is firm and will not tremble for one second even at the most dangerous culverts.

At this moment our leader is lying wounded. For a few days he struggled with death, but he vanquished it, and he still lives. This is symbolical. At one time it looked as if our revolution had been mortally wounded. It is at present coming round again, as our leader Comrade

Lenin is coming round; the clouds will scatter, and we shall vanquish all our enemies. (Storm of applause.)

In one of my telegrams to Lenin I expressed the wish that his first appearance before the public after his convalescence might take place at Petrograd in our midst. I am profoundly convinced that this was also desired by you, but I am afraid that it will not be so. Lenin will not be restrained. His first public appearance, indeed, already occurred to-day. He would not acquiesce in a condition of an invalid. He rises from bed, asks for telegrams and papers, sits down to work, and cannot forget that he is the most responsible worker in the greatest revolution in the world. (Applause.) That is why I think we shall not have the desired happiness. But we shall have the happiness of another kind. We know that no Soviet, no worker, enjoys so much the infinite love and respect of Lenin as the Petrograd Soviet and the Petrograd workers.

This, comrades, is no mere phrase; it is truth. Each time when the situation becomes difficult and calls for heroic measures, the first thing which occurs to Comrade Lenin is to appeal to the Petrograd proletariat. "Why are you idle? Don't you understand that you are the salt of the earth; that you must save not only yourselves, but the entire workers' revolution?" Such is the sense of the numerous messages which Comrade Lenin has addressed to you many times from Moscow. Lenin is convinced that any single one of you, Petrograd workers, is worth a hundred others. Comrade Lenin, one could almost say, has a superstitious faith in the Petrograd worker. He is profoundly convinced that the Petrograd worker can do anything he likes; that he possesses a special talisman; is made of a special metal.

Well, comrades, we are too great friends to need mutual compliments. Still, I will tell you that there is some truth in it. It is not, of course, that the Petrograd



## NICOLAI LENIN

workers are super-human creatures. It is that Petrograd has passed through the fire of two revolutions; that the Labour movement here has passed through the best school, and that Lenin began here in the 'nineties his career; also that many of you, without, perhaps, your being aware, have in you a drop from the sweat of his labours, of his untiring work. Here, in Petrograd, will be found even now circles and nests of disciples of Comrade Lenin, who used to pass from mouth to mouth among the more intelligent proletarians what they had learned of Comrade Lenin. Here a whole generation of labour fighters has had the happiness to see in their ranks a teacher like Lenin. . . .

On this day when there is such joy in our hearts on the occasion of the convalescence of Comrade Lenin, while the general situation of the revolution continues to be grave; on this day, if we wish to honour Comrade Lenin and to justify his hopes, we must say to ourselves: "Let us be at least a little like Comrade Lenin."

I remember a symposium which was published in 1912 at Saratoff by a group of Mensheviks and Bundists. One of the writers, I remember, apparently a sincere man, relating his reminiscences of the years 1903-5, wrote: "I was a Menshevik and I hated Lenin, but when I read his book, 'What is to be done,' somewhere in my mind a thought arose: 'Well, it would not be so bad, after all, to be a little like the ideal of a Russian revolutionary which Lenin depicts in the book.'" Such were the words of a Menshevik, of a rabid opponent of Lenin. But we disciples and followers of Lenin, we have the right to proclaim publicly: Yes, we are endeavouring to be at least a little like this ardent tribune of International Communism, like this greatest leader and worker of the Socialist Revolution ever known in history. Long live, then, Comrade Lenin! (Storm of applause.)

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